

God for being good to them. Think about it. With all the brutal hardships they had endured, with all the death and suffering they endured, they took time to have a great feast to thank Almighty God for being good to them. In the process, they gave us our first Thanksgiving.

We are thankful for the heritage of liberty bequeathed to us by our ancestors. We are thankful for the wisdom and the foresight of our Founding Fathers who bestowed to us a form of government unique in history, with its three strong pillars of executive, legislative, and judicial branches, each balanced and checked against one another.

In fact, Mr. President, that is the very point I want to emphasize. The very first national observance of Thanksgiving, which came in 1789, was to thank Almighty God for His role in creating our great country, and His assistance in the forming of our Constitution.

This happened when, in the very first Congress in 1789, Representative Elias Boudinot of New Jersey moved that a day of thanksgiving be held to thank God for giving the American people the opportunity to create a Constitution to preserve their newly won freedoms.

The resolution, as approved by both Houses of the Congress, requested that a "joint committee of both Houses be directed to wait upon the president of the United States, to request that he recommend to the people of the United States a day of public thanksgiving."

On September 26, 1789, the first Senate agreed to the House resolution, and a few days later a joint congressional committee delivered to President Washington a resolution "desiring the president of the United States to recommend a day of general thanksgiving."

Within a few days, on October 3, President Washington issued the first national thanksgiving proclamation. Our first and perhaps our greatest President proclaimed Thursday, November 26, 1789, to be a day of national thanksgiving.

That proclamation is a fascinating and informative document. It begins by proclaiming that, "it is the duty of all nations to acknowledge the providence of Almighty God, to obey His will, to be grateful for His benefits, and humbly implore His protection and favor."

The Father of our country left no doubt about his belief that our Nation was not simply the creation of mere mortals but was, in fact, guided by a Divine Hand. As if to emphasize this point, his proclamation went on to praise "that great and glorious Being who is the beneficent author of all the good that was, that is, or that will be." He exhorted the people of his young Republic to express their gratitude to Almighty God for his protection of them through the Revolutionary War. He wrote: "We may then all unite in rendering unto Him our sincere and humble thanks for His kind care and

protection of the people of this country previous to their becoming a nation."

That was George Washington. That was the basis of our first national Thanksgiving.

But he was not through. This was a Thanksgiving proclamation, so he proceeded to give thanks. He asked the American people to be thankful to Almighty God for "the civil and religious liberty with which we are blessed."

And he asked the American people to be thankful "for the peaceable and rational manner in which we have been enabled to establish constitutions of government for our safety and happiness, and particularly the national one now lately instituted."

I hope everyone caught that. President Washington was thanking the Good Lord for the Constitution that created the American Government.

At the request of our first President, citizens throughout the land assembled in churches on November 26, 1789, and thanked God for their government and asked Him for His Guidance in the years ahead. As for President Washington, he spent the day worshipping at an Episcopal church in Manhattan.

As you celebrate this Thanksgiving, enjoy your families. Enjoy your Thanksgiving feasts. Enjoy your football games and your parades.

But like President Washington, you might want to think about attending church on this great and glorious day and give thanks for our many blessings. Like President Washington, you may want to thank God for watching over the United States and for His assistance in the creation of our Constitution, our Nation's most basic and sacred document, which has guided and protected our country for more than 200 years, through world wars, great depressions, and bitter, divisive elections.

#### HONORING OUR ARMED FORCES

PRIVATE FIRST CLASS JEFFREY SHAFFER

Mr. LINCOLN. Mr. President, it is my honor to rise today to pay tribute to one of Arkansas' fallen heroes, PFC Jeffrey Shaffer, who gave his life serving our country in Operation Iraqi Freedom.

By all accounts from family and friends, Private First Class Shaffer lived his life to the fullest. For this young man, that meant caring for others, having fun, and making people laugh, even when confronted with life's challenges. The image of a tough soldier masked the side most familiar to his loved ones, that of a more playful young man who pulled pranks and brought laughter to lives of others. His stepfather, Mark Adams, recalls a golf outing where neither he nor Jeff was playing particularly well. Rather than suffer through the rest of the game, and to the surprise of Mark, Private First Class Shaffer jumped in the water and began collecting golf balls. Mark had never had more fun playing golf. The day was a testament to the effect Private First Class Shaffer often had on others.

But he also had a humble, more serious side and a deep sense of commitment to his country. While working for his uncle's masonry contracting business in Harrison, AR, he took time to earn his GED. Shortly thereafter, and to the surprise of many in his family, he joined the U.S. Army in February 2005. The tragic events of September 11 changed how he viewed the world and motivated him to serve in the military. For Private First Class Shaffer, serving in the Army was a way he could contribute to the safety of his family and security of all Americans.

The 20-year-old was assigned to the 2nd Battalion, 6th Infantry Regiment, 1st Armored Division. After being stationed in Germany, Private First Class Shaffer was deployed to Kuwait and later Iraq. Witnessing close friends lose their lives in Iraq, he was never naive about the dangerous realities of war. He believed whatever happened to him was God's will and often told this to his mother to calm her fears. Private First Class Shaffer's life ended on September 13, 2006, after a roadside bomb detonated near his Bradley assault vehicle.

On September 16, family, friends, and fellow soldiers gathered at Calvary Baptist Church in Waco, TX, to pay tribute to the life and legacy of Jeffrey Shaffer. I am proud to pay tribute to him today and am thankful for his service to our country. He leaves behind a 2-year-old daughter, Makayla Grace, who I hope will one day know that her father took full advantage of what life had to offer and brought untold happiness to those around him. My thoughts and prayers are with her, Jeffrey's parents, his aunt and uncle, and all those who knew and loved him.

LANCE CORPORAL KYLE WESLEY POWELL

Mr. SALAZAR. Mr. President, I want to bring to the Senate's attention the loss of a young man of great promise from my home State of Colorado: Marine LCpl Kyle Wesley Powell. A member of Unit C Co, 1st Combat Engineer Battalion, 1st Marine Division, I Marine Expeditionary Force out of Camp Pendleton, Lance Corporal Powell was killed earlier this month in Fallujah, Iraq.

Kyle Powell was a native of Colorado Springs. He was an Eagle Scout who graduated from Cheyenne Mountain High School, and joined the Marine Corps in September 2003. Lance Corporal Powell was on his third tour as a marine in Iraq. During his second tour, he received the Navy Achievement Medal after a bunker which he had designed and constructed absorbed an attack of several enemy rocket-propelled grenades, protecting the marines within it.

In fact, just a few days before his passing, Lance Corporal Powell had saved the life of another fellow marine, applying a tourniquet and firing his weapon at the enemy until they could be rescued.

What jumps out about Lance Corporal Powell is that when people speak

of him, one word keeps coming up: leader.

"He was always, always ready to go and lead from the front," said LTC Wayne Sinclair, commander of the 1st CEB.

In fact, at the time of his untimely loss, Lance Corporal Powell was leading a convoy moving to help extract a group of fellow marines from hostile territory. He was conducting a mine sweep when he was killed, likely saving the lives of five other marines who were behind him in a humvee.

I noted before that Lance Corporal Powell was on his third tour in Iraq. But it should be noted that he went on this third tour by choice: in August, he chose to lead by example. He volunteered to go to Iraq because his unit was short of others to send overseas.

At a time when so many of our young men and women are preoccupied with the coming course schedules at colleges and universities, Kyle Powell was focused on helping the people of Iraq.

Kyle's parents, Nancy and David are former Army officers, and they know firsthand the dangers their son faced. They know the same pride he felt in doing the work that by all accounts he truly loved.

Nancy and David, our Nation mourns the loss of your son with you. We celebrate his service to our Nation, his willingness to always selflessly step to the front and lead so that others, be they in his unit or half a world away in his hometown, would be safer. Our Nation is humbled by his heroism, and we hope your grief is soothed by knowing that his sacrifice is forever appreciated by every American.

LIUTENANT COLONEL ERIC J. KRUGER

Mr. President, I wish to take a moment to recall the life and service of Army LTC Eric J. Kruger, who was killed near Baghdad earlier this month. He was the highest-ranking officer from Fort Carson, CO, to be killed in Iraq and had only been there a few days.

Colonel Kruger was deputy commander of the 2nd Brigade Combat Team out of Fort Carson, which has recently been deployed to Iraq. Previously, Colonel Kruger had served a year in Afghanistan and less than 10 months after returning to the States and connecting with 2BCT was redeployed as part of an advance team to prepare for 2BCT's deployment to the area.

Colonel Kruger was a graduate of North Garland High in Texas and earned a bachelor's degree in political science and master's degree in liberal arts from Southern Methodist University in his home State before joining the U.S. Army in 1989. Colonel Kruger completed airborne and Ranger training.

As a soldier, Eric Kruger was of notable and rare distinction: during his service he had earned the Bronze Star, numerous Meritorious Service Awards and an Army Commendation medal. He was a man of deep patriotism and con-

viction in his job. He believed in making the world a better place and acted to help make that vision a reality.

But it is the testimony of those with whom he served that helps illuminate the extraordinary character of Colonel Kruger. One fellow soldier from Fort Carson remembered him as "a wonderful man and a great leader. Everyone who knew him loved him." A staff sergeant who served under him said that Colonel Kruger was "one of the few leaders" who helped her realize her life's path was with the U.S. Army: "Sir, your excitement, passion, and outstanding leadership moved me in my military career," she wrote. Another staff sergeant spoke of Kruger's respect for his fellow man, remembering that when he first met Colonel Kruger, "Even though he vastly out-ranked me, he always treated me and all others with a vast respect and kindness."

A fellow officer who served with Colonel Kruger in Afghanistan recalled his commitment to his family. "Eric was a good man, a fine soldier and a loving father. We often spoke of our families, and I remember being struck by his dedication to his family and his concern for their wellbeing." There is no doubt: Colonel Kruger cared deeply about his fellow man and dedicated his life to serving others.

To Colonel Kruger's wife Sara and their four children, Caitlin, Joshua, Christian, and Elise: You and Eric are in our prayers, today and always. May you find peace and solace in this time of grief, knowing that Eric's service to this Nation will not be forgotten. The many lives he positively shaped as an officer and American are tributes to his leadership and to your support of his efforts. For this, our entire Nation is grateful.

Colonel Eric Kruger was an unquestionable hero, a leader whom each of us can admire and who can inspire every Member of this body to redouble our efforts on behalf of him and every one of our Nation's veterans and men and women serving in uniform.

CALIFORNIA CASUALTIES

Mrs. BOXER. Mr. President, today I rise to pay tribute to 47 young Americans who have been killed in Iraq since July 18. This brings to 639 the number of soldiers who were either from California or based in California who have been killed while serving our country in Iraq. This represents 22 percent of all U.S. deaths in Iraq.

LCpl Geoffrey R. Cayer, 20, died July 18 from a nonhostile incident in Al Anbar province, Iraq. He was assigned to 3rd Battalion, 5th Marine Regiment, 1st Marine Division, I Marine Expeditionary Force, Camp Pendleton, CA.

SPC Joseph A. Graves, 21, died on July 25 in Baghdad, Iraq, from injuries sustained when his military vehicle encountered a vehicle-borne improvised explosive device and small arms fire. He was assigned to the 110th Military Police Company, 720th Military Police Battalion, III Corps, Fort Hood, TX. He was from Discovery Bay, CA.

LCpl James W. Higgins, 22, died July 27 from wounds received while conducting combat operations in Al Anbar province, Iraq. He was assigned to 1st Battalion, 1st Marine Regiment, 1st Marine Division, I Marine Expeditionary Force, Camp Pendleton, CA.

Cpl Phillip E. Baucus, 28, died July 29 while conducting combat operations in Al Anbar province, Iraq. He was assigned to 3rd Light Armored Reconnaissance Battalion, 1st Marine Division, I Marine Expeditionary Force, Twentynine Palms, CA.

Sgt Christian B. Williams, 27, died July 29 while conducting combat operations in Al Anbar province, Iraq. He was assigned to 3rd Light Armored Reconnaissance Battalion, 1st Marine Division, I Marine Expeditionary Force, Twentynine Palms, CA.

LCpl Anthony E. Butterfield, 19, died July 29 while conducting combat operations in Al Anbar province, Iraq. He was assigned to 3rd Light Armored Reconnaissance Battalion, 1st Marine Division, I Marine Expeditionary Force, Twentynine Palms, CA. He was from Clovis, CA.

PFC Jason Hanson, 21, died July 29 while conducting combat operations in Al Anbar province, Iraq. He was assigned to 3rd Light Armored Reconnaissance Battalion, 1st Marine Division, I Marine Expeditionary Force, Twentynine Palms, CA.

LCpl Kurt E. Dechen, 24, died August 3 from wounds received while conducting combat operations in Al Anbar province, Iraq. He was assigned to 1st Battalion, 25th Marine Regiment, 4th Marine Division, while attached to Regimental Combat Team 5, I Marine Expeditionary Force, Camp Pendleton, CA.

Petty Officer 2nd Class Marc A. Lee, 28, was killed on August 2 during combat operations while on patrol in Ramadi, Iraq. Lee was an aviation ordnanceman and a member of a SEAL team based in the San Diego area.

LCpl Jeremy Z. Long, 18, died August 10 while conducting combat operations in Al Anbar province, Iraq. He was assigned to 1st Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment, 1st Marine Division, I Marine Expeditionary Force, Twentynine Palms, CA.

SGT Jeffrey S. Brown, 25, died on August 10 in Rutbah, Iraq, of injuries sustained on August 8, when his helicopter crashed. He was assigned to the 82nd Medical Company, Fort Riley, KS. He was from Trinity Center, CA.

Hospitalman Chadwick T. Kenyon, 20, died on August 20 from wounds sustained when his Light Armored Vehicle struck an improvised explosive device while on combat patrol in Rawah, Iraq. He was assigned to the 3rd Light Armored Reconnaissance Battalion, 1st Marine Division, I Marine Expeditionary Force, Twentynine Palms, CA.

LCpl Randy L. Newman, 21, died August 20 while conducting combat operations in Al Anbar province, Iraq. He

was assigned to 3rd Light Armored Reconnaissance Battalion, 1st Marine Division, I Marine Expeditionary Force, Twentynine Palms, CA.

Cpl Adam A. Galvez, 21, died August 20 while conducting combat operations in Al Anbar province, Iraq. He was assigned to 3rd Light Armored Reconnaissance Battalion, 1st Marine Division, I Marine Expeditionary Force, Twentynine Palms, CA.

Chief Petty Officer Paul J. Darga, 34, died August 22 when his Explosive Ordnance Disposal Team was struck by an improvised explosive device while responding to a previous strike in the Al Anbar province, Iraq. Darga was assigned to Explosive Ordnance Disposal Mobile Unit Two, serving with the 1st Marine Logistics Group, Camp Pendleton, CA.

SGT David J. Almazan, 27, died on August 27 in Hit, Iraq, of injuries suffered when an improvised explosive device detonated near his vehicle during combat operations. Almazan was assigned to the 1st Battalion, 36th Infantry Regiment, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 1st Armored Division, Friedberg, Germany. He was from Van Nuys, CA.

LCpl Shane P. Harris, 23, died on September 3 while conducting combat operations in Al Anbar province, Iraq. He was assigned to 3rd Light Armored Reconnaissance Battalion, 1st Marine Division, I Marine Expeditionary Force, Twentynine Palms, CA.

Hospital Corpsman 2nd Class Christopher G. Walsh, 30, died on September 4 from wounds sustained when his vehicle struck an improvised explosive device while on combat patrol in Al Anbar, Iraq. His Navy Reserve Unit was attached to the I Marine Division in Camp Pendleton, CA.

PFC Hannah L. Gunterman, 20, died on September 4 in Taji, Iraq, of injuries sustained when she was struck by a vehicle. She was assigned to the 542nd Maintenance Company, 44th Corps Support Battalion, 593rd Corps Support Group, Fort Lewis, WA. She was from Redlands, CA.

SGT Luis A. Montes, 22, died on September 7 in Brooke Army Medical Center, San Antonio, TX, of injuries suffered on September 1 in Abu Ghraib, Iraq, when an improvised explosive device detonated near his vehicle during combat operations. He was assigned to the 1st Battalion, 22nd Infantry Regiment, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, Fort Hood, TX. He was from El Centro, CA.

Cpl Johnathan L. Benson, 21, died September 9 from wounds suffered on June 17 while conducting combat operations in Al Anbar province, Iraq. He was assigned to 3rd Battalion, 5th Marine Regiment, 1st Marine Division, I Marine Expeditionary Force, Camp Pendleton, CA.

SPC Harley D. Andrews, 22, died on September 11 in Ar Ramadi, Iraq, of injuries suffered when an improvised explosive device detonated near his vehicle during combat operations. He was assigned to the 54th Engineer Bat-

talion, 130th Engineer Brigade, Warner Barracks, Bamberg, Germany. He was from Weimar, CA.

CPL Cesar A. Granados, 21, died on September 15 of injuries sustained in Baghdad, Iraq, when an improvised explosive device detonated near his vehicle during combat operations. He was assigned to the 2nd Battalion, 8th Infantry Regiment, 3rd Brigade, 4th Infantry Division, Fort Hood, TX. He was from Le Grand, CA.

Petty Officer 2nd Class Michael A. Monsoor, 25, died September 29 while conducting combat operations against enemy forces in Ramadi, Iraq. He was a SEAL assigned to a San Diego-based command. He was from Garden Grove, CA.

SGT Joseph W. Perry, 23, died on October 2, in Muhallah, Iraq, when his mounted patrol came in contact with enemy forces using small arms fire during combat operations. He was assigned to the 21st Military Police Company, 16th Military Police Brigade, XVIIIth Airborne Corps, Fort Bragg, NC. He was from Alpine, CA.

SSG Daniel Isshak, 25, died on October 3 in Tikrit, Iraq, from injuries suffered when his vehicle received enemy small arms fire at Hawija, Iraq, during combat operations. He was assigned to the 2nd Battalion, 27th Infantry, 3rd Brigade, 25th Infantry Division, Schofield Barracks, HI. He was from Alta Loma, CA.

CPL Luis E. Tejeda, 20, died on September 30 in Hit, Iraq, of injuries sustained when his military vehicle encountered an improvised explosive device. He was assigned to A Company, 1st Battalion, 36th Infantry Regiment, 1st Armored Division, Friedberg, Germany. He was from Huntington Park, CA.

PFC Kenny F. Stanton, Jr., 20, died on October 13 in Baghdad, Iraq, when his military vehicle encountered an improvised explosive device. He was assigned to the 57th Military Police Company, 728th Military Police Battalion, Yong San, Korea. He was from Hemet, CA.

Sgt Jonathan J. Simpson, 25, died October 14 while conducting combat operations against enemy forces in Al Anbar province, Iraq. He was assigned to 1st Reconnaissance Battalion, 1st Marine Division, Camp Pendleton, CA.

PFC Keith J. Moore, 28, died October 14 in Baghdad, Iraq, of a noncombat-related injury. He was assigned to the 2nd Battalion, 14th Infantry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division, Fort Drum, NY. He was from San Francisco, CA.

CPT Mark C. Paine, 32, died October 15 in Taji, Iraq, from injuries suffered when an improvised explosive device detonated near his vehicle. He was assigned to the 1st Battalion, 66th Armor Regiment, 1st Brigade, 4th Infantry Division, Fort Hood, TX. He was from Rancho Cucamonga, CA.

SGT Lester D. Baroncini, Jr., 33, died on October 15 in Samarra, Iraq, when his military vehicle encountered mul-

tiple landmines. He was assigned to A Company, 2nd Battalion, 505th Parachute Infantry Regiment, 82nd Airborne Division, Fort Bragg, NC. He was from Bakersfield, CA.

SPC Jose R. Perez, 21, died October 18 in Ar Ramadi, Iraq, from injuries suffered from enemy small arms fire. He was assigned to the 1st Battalion, 6th Infantry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Armored Division, Baumholder, Germany. He was from Ontario, CA.

SGT Norman R. Taylor III, 21, died on October 17 in Baqubah, Iraq, when his military vehicle encountered an improvised explosive device. He was assigned to Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1st Battalion, 68th Armor Regiment, 4th Infantry Division, Fort Carson, CO. He was from Blythe, CA.

SPC Matthew W. Creed, 23, died on October 22 in Baghdad, Iraq, of injuries sustained from small arms fire. He was assigned to Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1st Battalion, 22nd Infantry Regiment, 4th Infantry Division, Fort Hood, TX. He was from Covina, CA.

Hospital Corpsman Charles O. Sare, 23, died October 23 from enemy action while conducting combat operations in the Al Anbar Province, Iraq. He was assigned to Naval Ambulatory Care Center, Port Hueneme, CA. He was from Hemet, CA.

PFC Jason Franco, 18, died October 31 from a nonhostile incident in Al Anbar province, Iraq. He was assigned to Marine Aviation Logistics Squadron 11, Marine Aircraft Group 11, 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing, Miramar, CA. He was from Corona, CA.

PVT Michael P. Bridges, 23, died November 2 in Taji, Iraq, from a noncombat-related incident. He was assigned to the 1st Battalion, 66th Armor Regiment, 1st Brigade, 4th Infantry Division, Fort Hood, TX. He was from Placentia, CA.

SSG Joseph A. Gage, 28, died November 2 in Baghdad, Iraq, of injuries suffered when an IED detonated near his vehicle. He was assigned to the 1st Battalion, 506th Infantry Regiment, 4th Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division, Fort Campbell, KY. He was from Modesto, CA.

Cpl Jose A. Galvan, 22, died November 5 while conducting combat operations in Al Anbar province, Iraq. He was assigned to the 1st Combat Engineer Battalion, 1st Marine Division, I Marine Expeditionary Force, Camp Pendleton, CA.

Cpl Kyle W. Powell, 21, died November 4, from wounds suffered while conducting combat operations in Al Anbar province, Iraq. He was assigned to the 1st Combat Engineer Battalion, 1st Marine Division, I Marine Expeditionary Force, Camp Pendleton, CA.

SSG Richwell A. Doria, 25, died on November 7 in Kirkuk, Iraq, after being struck by small arms fire during an air assault mission. He was assigned to the 2nd Battalion, 35th Infantry Regiment,

3rd Brigade, 25th Infantry Regiment, Schofield Barracks, HI. He was from San Diego, CA.

SFC Rudy A. Salcido, 31, died on November 9 in Baghdad, Iraq, after an improvised explosive device detonated near his convoy vehicle. Salcido was assigned to the Army National Guard's 1114th Transportation Company, Bakersfield, CA. He was from Ontario, CA.

SGT Angel De Lucio Ramirez, 22, died on November 11 in Ar Ramadi, Iraq, when his military vehicle encountered an improvised explosive device. He was assigned to the 16th Engineer Battalion, 1st Brigade, 1st Armored Division, Giessen, Germany. He was from Pacoima, CA.

LCpl Timothy W. Brown, 21, died November 14 while conducting combat operations in Al Anbar province, Iraq. He was assigned to the 2nd Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment, 3rd Marine Division, III Marine Expeditionary Force, Kaneohe Bay, HI. He was from Sacramento, CA.

PFC Jang H. Kim, 20, died on November 13 when his military vehicle encountered an improvised explosive device. He was assigned to Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1st Battalion, 26th Infantry Regiment, 1st Infantry Division, Schweinfurt, Germany. He was from Placentia, CA.

LCpl Mario D. Gonzalez, 21, died November 14 while conducting combat operations in Al Anbar province, Iraq. He was assigned to 2nd Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment, 3rd Marine Division, III Marine Expeditionary Force, Kaneohe Bay, HI. He was from La Puente, CA.

I would also like to pay tribute to the four soldiers from or based in California who have died while serving our country in Operation Enduring Freedom since July 18.

SPC Andrew Velez, 22, died on July 25 in Sharona, Afghanistan, of a noncombat-related injury. He was assigned to the 699th Maintenance Company, Corps Support Battalion, Theater Support Command, Fort Irwin, CA.

SFC Merideth L. Howard, 52, died in Kabul, Afghanistan, on September 8, when a vehicle-borne improvised explosive device detonated near her vehicle. She was assigned to the Army Reserve's 405th Civil Affairs Battalion, Fort Bragg, NC. She was from Alameda, CA.

SPC Fernando D. Robinson, 21, died on October 2 in Korengal, Afghanistan, from injuries sustained when his patrol came under attack by enemy forces using small arms fire and rocket propelled grenades. He was assigned to the 1st Battalion, 32nd Infantry Regiment, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division, Light Infantry, Fort Drum, NY. He was from Hawthorne, CA.

PFC Alex Ocegueda, 19, died on October 31 in Wygal Valley, Afghanistan, of injuries suffered when an IED detonated near his vehicle. He was assigned to the 1st Battalion, 32nd Infantry Regiment, 3rd Brigade Combat Team,

10th Mountain Division, Fort Drum, NY. He was from San Bernardino, CA.

#### INTERNET GAMBLING

Mr. KYL. Mr. President, I would like to address the recent enactment of the Unlawful Internet Gambling and Enforcement Act of 2006. Due to procedural considerations at the end of the regular session, this law was enacted as title VIII of H.R. 4954, a bill focused on port security. But I want the record to show that I have been working to pass this law for more than 10 years, with the support of many colleagues. Indeed, the Senators serving as conferees for the port security bill accepted including the Internet gambling title, as did the leadership on both sides of the aisle. And this July, the House of Representatives voted 317-93 in favor of a bill containing not only identical enforcement measures to those that were recently enacted, but also including the more controversial Wire Act amendments.

Over the last five Congresses, a stand-alone Internet gambling bill has been passed by at least one Chamber of Congress, every time by overwhelming bipartisan votes. The last time an Internet gambling bill came before the whole Senate, it was passed by unanimous consent. Unfortunately, the Jack Abramoff scandal corrupted the process for that bill in the House of Representatives. Since then, the full Senate has not had the opportunity to vote on more recent legislation repeatedly passed by more than three-quarters of the House. So I greatly appreciate the assistance of the majority leader and the conferees in finally getting this long-overdue law to the President's desk.

The National Association of Attorneys General—NAAG—first approached me in 1995 about the problem of Internet gambling. The State attorneys general were concerned about the evasion and erosion of State laws by gambling websites operating beyond the reach of State law enforcement. I heeded NAAG's request and introduced the first Internet gambling bill late that year to increase Federal enforcement of gambling laws.

Over the next 10 years, Senate and House Committees repeatedly held hearings and markups. We listened to the experts about what types of enforcement would be effective or impractical, and revised the legislation in response. In 1999, the congressionally commissioned National Gambling Impact Study Commission Report recommended that law enforcement target the payment systems to combat illegal offshore gambling, so that is the approach we adopted.

I have worked closely with Representative JIM LEACH, former chair of the House Financial Services Committee, a very capable and thoughtful colleague who will be greatly missed in future Congresses. Representative MIKE OXLEY, who succeeded Mr. LEACH

as Financial Services chairman a few years ago, Representative JIM SENSENBRENNER, chairman of the House Committee on the Judiciary, and Representative BOB GOODLATTE, who sponsored the bill scuttled by Jack Abramoff, have all helped shape Internet gambling legislation over the last several years.

Why has Congress been so supportive of Internet gambling legislation for so long? Because offshore operators have been flouting American laws for personal gain. They have been giving Americans the false impression that these activities are legal. They have been profiteering from this. The Federal Government has long given States the right to prohibit or limit gambling activities for the protection of the public, but offshore Web sites have been ignoring and circumventing the State laws. State law enforcement officials and Congress refused to stand idly by as our laws were evaded and eroded.

How could an illegal activity become so pervasive? Knowing that their businesses are illegal in the United States and many other countries, Internet-gambling businesses have set up shop in countries with very few gambling regulations, such as Antigua and Costa Rica. These small countries benefit from the billions of dollars of profit generated by their local gambling operators. So when the United States tries to prosecute a criminal violation of its gambling laws, these countries are not interested in extraditing their wealthiest residents. The United States is thwarted in its efforts to enforce its criminal laws against offshore gambling businesses.

Some say that, instead of trying to enforce the law, we should legalize and regulate online gambling. Why does this approach have so little support in Congress? Because Internet gambling is a scourge to society, leading to addiction and bankruptcy, and enticing young people into a gambling lifestyle.

Internet gambling is highly addictive. Online gambling is available 24/7 from almost any location. Fast and continuous play, often financed by credit, allows online gamblers to rapidly lose tens of thousands of dollars, leading to bankruptcy, family devastation, and criminal activity. It is easy to conceal the addiction because an online gambler does not need to leave home or the office to gamble, and shows no physical signs of addictive behavior like an alcohol or drug addict does.

Various recent studies show that Internet gamblers are two to three times more likely to become addicted than brick-and-mortar gamblers. One study of students at the University of Connecticut found that 74 percent of Internet gamblers were problem or pathological gamblers. The Annenberg Public Policy Center's 2005 National Annenberg Risk Survey of Youth—NARSY—surveyed 900 young people between 14 and 22 and found that 54 percent of youth who gamble online at